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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

Sixth periodic report of States parties due in 2016

Samoa*

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Foreword

It gives me great pleasure as the Minister for Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD) to present Samoa's Sixth Periodic Report to the United Nations Committee on the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW).

The work on the advancement of women continues to progress in line with the policy direction of our national development plan, the Strategy for Development of Samoa 2016-2020, the Community Development Sector Plan 2016-2020 and the Samoa National Policy for Gender Equality 2016-2020. Thus, to ensure that women and girls were participating not only as contributors to but also beneficiaries to social and economic development at all levels.

We recognise the progress and achievements to date, we also acknowledge the many challenges in ensuring the government stays committed to move the gender equality agenda forward, in all aspects of life. The government with the financial and technical support of its development partners will continue to adopt the multi-sectoral approach in implementing its obligations under the Convention.

We wish to acknowledge the technical assistance provided by Mr Martin Child of UN Women to our Ministry in supporting the development process for this report. Lastly, I would like to commend the work of the government ministries, our Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), our village women representatives, community networks, development partners and all our women who have contributed to the work of CEDAW for the period under review and most importantly in contributing to the development of this report.

(Signed) Hon. Faimalotoa Kika Stowers Ah Kau
Minister for Women, Community and Social Development

Introduction

1. Samoa's Sixth periodic report details its implementation to date in relation to challenges and recommendations from the Committee since Samoa's report in 2010 and; the content reflects progress to date since the submission of our Follow Up Procedure Report in 2015.

2. It must be noted that while Samoa is vulnerable to effects of climate change, an urgent threat to many Pacific Island Countries (PICs), we are committed to ensuring the protection of human rights of all its women and girls. This is evident in considerable progress in conducting the CEDAW legislative compliance review and reviewing its legislations in its progressive efforts to domesticate CEDAW. Much of this work is seen through the enactment of some key legislations promoting the rights of women and the girl child like the Family Safety Act (FSA) 2013, Labour Employment Relations Act 2013, Education Act 2009 to name a few. Also, the Constitutional Amendment Act 2013 which provides a temporary special measure to increase the representation of women in Parliament. Consequently, after the 2016 general elections, 4 females were voted in by their constituencies while one (1) came into Parliament through this quota system.

3. The GoS (Government of Samoa) continues to disseminate information throughout various communication, education and information mediums in relation to CEDAW including the concluding comments. In 2015, as a result of a joint initiative amongst the Samoa Law Reform Commission, MWCSD and UN Women produced an updated Samoan translation of the Convention which was distributed to all public and private entities. In addition, the GoS through a bi lateral partnership with Government of Australia/DFAT commenced the inception phase for the five year Samoa Women Shaping Development (SWSD) Program that aims to address the gender inequalities in Samoa. The project design and Implementation Plan for the SWSD was informed by recommendations made in the concluding comments and gap areas identified by Samoa as priorities for women's advancement.

4. Samoa is pleased to report that it has ratified the CRPD and ICCPR however; we will pursue the ratification of all international treaties on the basis of priorities, taking into account capacity and resource constraints in fulfilling obligations stipulated therein. The GoS as it does all other conventions it is Party to, continues to take thorough assessment of Samoa's accession to the remaining conventions that includes its ability to fulfil all obligations required by each convention such as reporting, legislative, financial and institutional requirements to ensure it is able to deliver, upon becoming a State Party to these conventions. The CEDAW Follow Up Procedure report was submitted in 2015 on steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 14 and 28. (Please refer to Annex 14).

5. Samoa confirms that national level consultations were conducted in the preparation of this report and representatives from government ministries, NHRI, all NGOs, and CSOs working for the advancement of women, private sector and Village Women Representatives (VWRs) as the grassroots level representatives participated. Their important contributions are included in relevant areas of this report. The concerns raised by the UN CEDAW Committee on Samoa's previous report are addressed in this report following the harmonized guidelines of reporting under international human rights treaties. The report was due in July 2016 but Samoa was unable to submit on time due to other competing priorities in 2016 where the national women's machinery as the focal point for CEDAW reporting were also hosting of the 11th Commonwealth Women Affairs Ministerial Meeting (WAMM), in addition to the MWCSD going through a critical process of restructuring of its strategic and organisational landscape.

Part I

Discrimination and protections, human rights, prejudice and exploitation

Response to Concluding Observations 8 and 9: Dissemination of Concluding Observations

6. The GoS through the MWCSD conducted three Post New York forums in August and September 2012 which was attended by 40 stakeholders consisting of Government ministries, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Parliamentarians, members of the judiciary as well as 164 Village Women Representatives. The objectives were to bring together the MWCSD and its stakeholders to discuss the issues raised by the UN CEDAW Committee in relation to the State and Complimentary report made by NGOs. This was to ensure a "whole of Samoa" approach was adopted towards implementation of the Concluding Comments. Consequently, the SWSD has supported gender equality activities since May 2015. The concluding comments were translated in Samoan and were distributed with the Samoan version of CEDAW to the communities including village representatives (both male and female) during various forums.

7. We have taken steps encouraging the participation of all branches of government including Parliament to ensure full implementation of concluding observations. This is evident in extensive consultations conducted with a broad range of stakeholders including village communities, Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), media, NGOs, government ministries, private sector and development partners. Also, individual consultations were conducted with members of the judiciary, Cabinet Ministers, Prime Minister which informed the program design of the SWSD. Discussants included, inter alia, rural and urban women, men, young people, women with disabilities, eminent Samoan leaders, and church representatives in the capital, Apia, as well as in Savaii (representing stakeholders from across rural areas).

8. At the highest political level, the Prime Minister's advocacy for gender equality is demonstrated by his commitment to the Constitutional Amendment for a 10 percent quota for female Parliamentarians, despite strong opposition. In discussions, he requested a focus in the Country Plan on the role of sport for women and girls as a tool for empowerment to support change in social attitudes for improving gender equality at multiple levels. High-level political commitment to gender equality is also reflected in Cabinet, notably through the former Minister of Justice and the Minister for Women who stated that: 'the future of Samoa lies in the hands of women'. The judiciary is also a strong advocate in ensuring appropriate processes and capacity to raise awareness on, and enforce, the new Family Safety Act 2013. Additionally, the Women in Leadership Advocacy Group (WINLA), consisting of women Parliamentarians and CEOs of Government agencies, is a key high-level network for supporting and improving sectoral approaches in gender. This level of political support for progressing gender equality in Samoa provides a strong foundation for progressing change within Government, civil society and communities.

Response to Concluding Observations 10 and 11: Visibility and implementation of the Convention

9. A workshop on CEDAW was conducted by the MWCSD in partnership with the SPC/RRRT in 2014. Through the training 42 participants, 34 females and 8 males were informed on the articles, processes and guidelines pertaining to the CEDAW, they were also able to reflect on national progress to date with regards to CEDAW implementation, and take stock of CEDAW recommendations from the UN CEDAW review, to facilitate the next reporting process.

10. The MWCSD continues to adopt a multi-sectoral approach in its outreach programs whereby women's human rights including sexual reproductive health (SRH) rights enshrined

under CEDAW are widely discussed with women inclusive of women with disabilities both in the urban and rural areas. For instance, a Teen Mums Program was launched in early 2013 by the MWCSD in partnership with MOP, Samoa Family Health Association (SFHA) as a commemorative activity for International Women's Day and has been translated into a community outreach program on an annual basis. The highlight of the program is on SRH rights with a close link to gender based violence. Additionally, the conduct of ongoing mothers and daughters' village outreach programs addresses social issues including teenage pregnancy, SRH and rights and focuses on mother-father and parent-child relationship with regards to positive parenting and appropriate child-care. The program contents goes as far as discussion of cultural and religious attitudes associated with teenage pregnancy, school dropout and sexual and physical violence against women and children.

11. Sectoral participation of VWRs and members of women's committees in multi-sectoral forums improve their awareness of their human rights as well as strengthen their capacity in regards to the application of their rights to access information and services across sectors. Some key VWRs have been appointed as members of the steering committees such as Law and Justice Sector which is a key sector in fully domesticating CEDAW in Samoa. These representatives not only provide technical advice on issues faced by women in the communities to inform policy interventions for women's empowerment but they facilitate access to development projects for women and girls in the grassroots level to improve access to information and services in areas of health, violence prevention, leadership, access to justice, disaster risk reduction, education and others.

12. Multimedia campaigns both in the English and Samoan language continue to be used on an annual basis to raise awareness of the women and girls of their human rights as well as cage public awareness of the pressing issues faced by women today.

Article 1: Definition of discrimination against women

Response to Concluding Observations and Recommendations 12 and 13

13. The SLRC report on CEDAW Compliance Review notes that Samoa's legislation is consistent with requirements of CEDAW to provide a legal framework to provide protection against discrimination against women.

14. Everyone both men and women are guaranteed Freedom from Discrimination in the Constitution of Samoa. Article 15 (1) states "All persons are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection under the law. Also, article (2) "Except as expressly authorized under the provisions of this Constitution, no law, and no executive or administrative action of the State shall, either expressly or in its practical application, subject any person or persons to any disability or restriction or confer on any person or persons any privilege or religion, political or other opinion, social origin, place of birth, family status, or any of them. Part 3 of this article also states that "Nothing in this Article shall: ... (b) prevent the making of any provision for the protection or advancement of women or children or of any socially or educationally retarded class of persons".[1] The inclusion of this fundamental right to freedom from discrimination in the Constitution as the supreme law guarantees the protection against direct or indirect discrimination against women, children and all other socially disadvantaged persons and enforceable through the courts.[2]

[1] Samoa Law Reform Commission, Samoa's Legislative Compliance Review with CEDAW Final Report, 2016.

[2] Ibid.

Further progress on implementation

15. Other efforts to domesticate the CEDAW into its domestic legal system include a number of legislative reforms and enforcement of legislations which was reported in Samoa's Follow Up Procedure Report and are further explained in Appendix 2.

Article 2: Obligations to eliminate discrimination

Please also refer to Article 5

Response to Concluding Observations 16 and 17

16. Pursuant to the Ombudsman Act 2013, the NHRI was established in June within the existing Office of the Ombudsman and is mandated to monitor, promote and protect human rights in Samoa. The Institute operates on Government funds with a start up budget of SAT327, 00.00 and 3 staff. In 2016, staff increased to 4 excluding the Ombudsman and Human Rights Commissioner and they include Director of Human Rights, Legal Officer, Communications and Education Officer and Senior Support Officer with a budget of SAT373, 501.00. The office is now equipped with its own staff which has allowed the Institute to commence its mandated functions of inquiring into and reporting on human rights violations. In January 2016, the NHRI submitted its application for accreditation as compliant with the Paris Principles to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) where it was graded as an "A Status" in the GANHRI's Accreditation meeting in May 2016. This achievement has made the NHRI Samoa the first in the Pacific region to be awarded an "A status" meaning that the Office of the Ombudsman/N.H.R.I is now able to engage with various human rights bodies and participate independently at the UN Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies.

Further progress on implementation

17. The NHRI prepared two annual State of Human Rights reports covering the period since its inception up to June 2016. The issues discussed in the first report focused on highlighting the need for better safeguards for equality and respect for all including women in Samoa. It draws attention on the pressing human rights issues faced by Samoa's most vulnerable populations including women. The issues raised in this report are a result of discussions in village consultations which was focused on rural areas with traditional village settings. A total of 47% males and 53% females participated.

18. The second state of Human Rights Report submitted to Parliament in June 2016 focused on the rights of Persons With Disabilities (PWD). The village consultations focused on rural areas with a gender breakdown of the total participants as 45% male and 55% female. The report covers many aspects of the protection and promotion of the rights of PWD with some of the most critical issues including the need for better protection for women with disabilities. The report was tabled in Parliament in September 2016 which contributed in the efforts to push for the ratification of CRPD in December of the same year.

19. The NHRI implemented Friendly School Program in 2016 as a direct result of findings from the first state of human rights report in 2015. One critical finding highlighted that children misunderstand/misinterpret what their rights are and the adults have a misconception around the rights of the child. Thus the program aims to increase awareness and understanding of human rights in schools as a fundamental first step towards dispelling misconceptions about the child's rights. It further hopes to help instill the knowledge, respect and positive attitude that can foster better understanding of the rights of the child and its application. For example, both teachers and students will respect, support and help create an enabling environment for teenage girls impregnated while in the school system so that they continue to exercise their right to education by completing college and moving onto tertiary education.

The program has covered 5 schools so far ranging from private to public schools, secondary to primary schools. It is an ongoing program in partnership with the Ministry of Police's (MOP) Community Engagement Unit. Similar programs are conducted for communities commencing in 2016 with coverage of 6 villages to date.

20. The MWCSD Supporting Samoa's Children Initiative launched in December 2016 providing social and economic support through the SWSD program assists low income families to find alternative sustainable sources of income so that they become less reliant on the children to provide a source of income for them. Our intention has been to resolve the root cause of the presenting issue to ensure children particularly, the girl child's safety from sexual exploitation. Business concepts being supported are vegetable gardening, handicrafts and small restaurant/canteen business development. Six families were identified from the pilot survey with 35 children benefit from the program. 22 (63%) of these children aged 6 – 16 years have been reinstated back to schools in collaboration with MESC. One young person was assisted through the Youth Employment Project to attend a vocational school after many years of non-attendance.

21. The legislative compliance review of Convention for People with Disabilities (CRPD) is completed and recommends the Disability Bill to note the multiple discriminations faced by women with disabilities and may be necessary to provide for specific protections that are not covered under existing legislation such as a prohibition against forced sterilisation and other areas like education, health and labour. Following the CRPD ratification, a number of advocacy and training programs have been held under the joint umbrella of the Disability Taskforce consisting of government, National Council of Persons with Disabilities, Loto Taumafai, Senese, Aoga Fiamalamalama and Samoa Blind People Association. Mainstreaming disability rights has been recognized as a national planning priority in the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) since 2008 and an annual budget allocation of $30,000.00 (Samoan Tala) has been put aside by the government for the commemoration of the International Disability Week. This is in addition to GoS local budget contribution of SAT196, 472.00 from October 2013 to October 2017 as well as DFAT project funds amounting to AUD1, 848,293.00 to the Samoa Disability Program (SDP) housed at the MWCSD.

Article 3: The development and advancement of women

22. *Please also refer to notes in Article 1, 2, 11 for developments in the Community Development Sector Plan 2016-2020, Gender Equality Policy 2016-2020, Policy for Persons with Disabilities and Youth Employment Program.*

Response to Concluding Observations 14 and 15

23. The existence of the MWCSD as the NWM is the leading government agency directly responsible for promoting the advancement of women. The functions of the Ministry include promoting the work of women and women's committees which also includes primary health care and sanitation in line with the Healthy Homes Healthy Villages program. It also provides livelihood skills training for women to improve their skills in sewing, weaving the traditional arts and crafts, screen printing, and relationship building programs like Positive Parenting, Mothers and Daughters, Young Couples, Teen Mums, Social Protection Awareness Programs and Community Conversations to name a few. The Ministry also advises the government on issues affecting the full realization of women's rights and provides feedback to the women and their committees to assist with moving forward on these issues. More importantly, the MWCSD is undergoing organizational structure reforms under new divisions namely Governance, Social Development and Economic Empowerment replacing the Division for Internal Affairs, Women and Youth. Realigning the work groups to be inclusive is a more natural reflection of the organization of families/villages the MWCSD is intended to support.

Hence, the concerns of gender equity, youth development, child protection, advancement of PWD are better mainstreamed into the work of core divisions.

Table 1

Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development Summary Total over 4 years

2012/2013 (Samoan Tala, ST)	*2013/2014 (ST)*	*2014/2015 (ST)*	*2015/2016 (ST)*
ST 10,790, 395 million	ST10,770,835 million	ST10,436,807	ST11,267,780

24. Although the government budget allocation is only 10%, we acknowledge that Samoa is not alone in this in the Pacific. However, the government commitment to gender equality is evident in most of the work of the MWCSD being funded by the local government. It increased budget allocations from SAT10, 790,395 million in Financial Year 2012/2013 to SAT11, 267,780 in FY2015/2016 as reflected in the table above.

25. In strengthening the NWM, the Government of Australia in March 2015 invested *AUD3.*8 million to the SWSD Program, a five (5) year initiative which will drive gender equality programs at all levels including increasing women's economic empowerment, increased participation of women in public life and decision making, reduced gender based violence and capacity development of the MWCSD as the NWM.

26. The MWCSD Work Force Plan 2013-2017 articulates what human resources/capital is required in order to effectively implement its Strategic Plan. It highlights capacity development for staff as a key priority, with a focus on training, staff retention program and employee recognition in addition to new opportunities provided through the organizational restructuring and improving infrastructure. Through this, staff are encouraged to continue education for higher qualifications. A total of 3 staff studied for Masters Qualifications during the period under review with one completed in 2016. Ongoing induction programs are done for every new staff and action learning programs are implemented for all MWCSD staff by those who attend training programs locally and overseas to share knowledge learned as a form of capacity development.

27. Since 2013, new opportunities to up- skill senior and officer level staff have been realised through work attachments in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand. A total of 7 staff received training in policy development, child protection IEC design information technology skills.

28. In addition to updates provided in our Follow up Procedure report in relation to strengthening our impact assessment mechanisms, a Gender Statistics workshop was conducted with the support of SPC/RRRT in September 2016. This was attended by 45 gender focal points (13M, 32F) from government ministries, NGOs to strengthen gender mainstreaming, gender statistics and data analysis. A 'draft' gender statistics framework developed prior to the workshop will now be revisited during the review of its Strategic Plan 2013-2017, moving to user-friendly excel workbooks, stored in a central location and linked for reporting purposes. After the workshop, the SPC/RRRT will continue to provide technical assistance to the MWCSD to strengthen its gender statistics and data analysis.

29. To improve impact assessments, the monitoring and evaluation framework of the NWM developed in 2014 will be reviewed this year in line with the Public Service Commission (PSC) Functional Analysis report in which the NWM restructure is based on. The report recommended outsourcing the implementation of community social development programs and services to the private sector and NGOs to achieve desired and expected outcomes while the MWSCD focuses on its policy role, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of these programs and services. Therefore, the M & E tools of the MWCSD will be reviewed together with its Strategic Plan 2013-2017 to identify gaps in its M & E and recommend how to strengthen the M & E tools to achieve outcomes based reporting.

Further progress on implementation

30. The SDS 2016-2020 under Priority Area 2: Social has three (3) Key Outcomes 6, 7 and 8 which looks into *A healthy Samoa and well-being promoted, Quality education and training improved, and Social institutions strengthened*. The ultimate aim is to achieve improved health and education outcomes, and empowering communities to lead inclusive development for an improved quality of life for all and ensuring a safe Samoa. The SDS 2016-2020 has a vision of "An Improved Quality of Life for All" on the theme "Accelerating Sustainable Development and Broadening Opportunities for All". Under Priority Outcome 2, Key Outcomes 6 and 7 promotes the achievement of health and education outcomes for all including women. More importantly, Key Outcome 8 points to the inclusion of vulnerable groups like women, people with disabilities, young people in village governance, promoting access to information and services in education, health, climate change and law and justice sectors to achieve gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls. The strategy is accompanied by a plan of action with relevant gender indicators to measure each of the activities.

31. The Community Development Sector (CDS) Plan 2016-2021 has taken a new approach towards addressing community needs by mobilizing the family, village and district support for Communities to lead inclusive development for quality life for all. The mission to empower communities to lead, coordinate and monitor community development services and programs through effective partnerships and collective responsibilities. Good governance programs implemented by the MWCSD and its partners where village by laws are developed based on good governance principles and the participation of women and young people including those with disabilities in developing their village by laws together with the village council is evidence of practising good governance at the village level.

32. The MWCSD Strategic Plan 2013-2017 strategic framework aims to ensure effective monitoring and direct community impact based on framework previously used for the CDS Plan 2010-2015 under core outcomes areas of Community Strength and Income and Living Standards. The MWCSD's Strategic Plan 2013-2017 operates on 3 core areas on Institutional Strengthening, Community Strengths and Socio-economic well-being with a mission "To lead community and social development to enable social and economic wellbeing for all". This will contribute to achievement of its vision "The people of Samoa become productive citizens through their participation in sustainable community and social development". The M & E framework for this is developed to respond to community development issues and promotion of community ownership of programs/initiatives. The Plan has supported activities in favour of advancement of women and girls including those with disabilities and the elderly through improved participation in leadership and decision making, better protection from violence against women and girls, more opportunities/ increased participation in economic development, disaster risk reduction and access to basic services and infrastructure. Review of the Plan is currently being undertaken, with the findings to inform the next Strategic Plan for this Ministry.

33. Samoa National Policy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 which provides a framework for accelerating gender equality and well-being of women and girls in Samoa by capitalizing on the supporting role of men and boys to achieve outcomes for women and girls. The five policy outcomes include;

1) Peaceful families and communities
2) Healthy women and girls
3) Equal economic opportunities for women
4) Increased participation of women in public leadership and decision making
5) Increased access to education and gender sensitive education curricula

6) Community resilience and climate change and disaster preparedness informed by gender sensitive information and approaches

7) Enhanced institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality

34. *The* MWCSD is developing policies for Youth and Persons with Disabilities to target approaches to effectively address the issues pertaining to PWD and young people.

35. The MWCSD and its stakeholders coordinate community programs through the network of the Village Women Representatives (WVRs). The VWRs are appointed by the women's committees and supported by the village council for each traditional village in Samoa. To date, a total of 118 VWRs for Upolu and 77 for Savaii work closely with women's committees in their villages to ensure development projects benefit women and that the needs of women in their communities are considered by the government.

36. In December 2014, Cabinet endorsed a salary increase for VWRs operating at community level, an increase from SAT125.00 to SAT200.00 per fortnight, thus reducing the pay gap with the VRs. This is a positive reflection of how serious the Government is in terms of applying gender equity and supporting achievement of gender parity when it comes to reducing the pay gap inequality amongst females and males serving as village representatives.

37. The Ministry of Women Affairs Act (MOWA) 1990 states the establishment of the Women's Advisory Committee (WAC) within the MWCSD. This committee consists of the Minister as Chairperson, 16 community representatives appointed with the MWCSD as the secretariat and their responsibility is to oversee the full development and advancement of women in all aspects of life in Samoa.

38. In 2015, a *Stocktake of the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity* was conducted for Samoa in partnership with SPC to analyse the degree to which there is enabling environment for gender mainstreaming to take place. The report highlights strengths and constraints for gender mainstreaming and had recommended strategic approaches for gender mainstreaming in Samoa including 1) Political will and organizational culture, 2) Legal and constitutional frameworks, 3) Improving the technical and financing capacity and 4) Accountability mechanisms. The GoS has implemented a number of the recommended strategies to improve gender mainstreaming which include the enactment of the Constitutional Amendment Act 2013 reserving five Parliamentary seats for female members of Parliament, the endorsement and implementation of the Samoa National Policy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 and completing the CEDAW Legislative Compliance Review in 2016. Moreover, in strengthening its capacity in gender analysis, gender responsive planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, the MWCSD has integrated gender mainstreaming capacity building in its workforce plan to facilitate the opportunity for its staff and one of which was facilitated by the SPC/RRRT in September 2016 which is discussed in detail in Article 3: Sections 22, 24 and 25. Another recommended strategy was establishing gender focal points across government ministries. Therefore, the MWCSD strengthened the membership of its CEDAW Partnership committee which consists of representatives from government and NGOs by adding new members to the committee including representation from the Samoa Bureau of Statistics SBS, to assist with gender responsive reporting by developing gender indicators and collecting sex disaggregated data at the national level for census and surveys. Also, the NHRI was invited to the committee given the linkages between CEDAW and human rights in Samoa. The SBS work started in August 2014 on the establishment of a set of core minimum Gender Indicators for Samoa modelled on the UNESCAP Regional Gender Framework adopted for the Review of Beijing Platform for Action + 20. The Sector Planning Manual for Samoa (2015) emphasizes mainstreaming gender equity as priority areas for Sector Planning (SP) across all sectors. In addition, the Samoa Monitoring Evaluation Reporting Framework Manual for Sector Planning (SMERF) was used in developing the M & E framework for the current CSP 2016-2020 to align planning and reporting on progress for the CSP 2016-2020 which has a strong gender focus in all thematic areas.

Article 4: Acceleration of equality between men and women

Response to Concluding Observations 18 and 19

39. To date, the GoS has installed one quota in its political system namely the Constitutional Amendment Act 2013 whereby 10% of parliamentary seats are reserved for women. This appeared to have encouraged women to run, doubled with the advocacy of the Samoa Women Rising Break Through Initiative Group which was the result of the TLDP which saw an increase in the numbers of female candidates to 25.

40. The VWRs is established by legislation to represent the village and be responsible for carrying out certain administrative tasks and representing the village to national policy makers.[3] Although the legislation does not discriminate against gender, the position is often filled by males because the selection is done by the villages themselves. To date, a total of 254 VRs (3 females, 251 males) are employed by the MWCSD. In accelerating equality between males and females, the government established the VWRs in the MOWA 1995 to ensure participation of women in a similar role.[4]

41. Although there are no legislative barriers to participation in political and public life as appointment to government offices and boards is based on merit, women and men have equal voting rights, the requirement that candidates must hold a matai (chiefly title) title to stand for Parliament applies to both men and women. However, there is low representation of women on boards, Parliament, village council meetings. Therefore, the SLRC in its report recommended that in order for Samoa to be fully compliant with the Convention, there should be a legislation prohibition around the restrictions on matai titles bestowed on women due to their gender. Also, for villages which ban women from participating in village council meetings, alternatives should be explored including the establishment of a separate women's committee with allotted meetings with the village *fono* (village council) to discuss certain village matters, allowing female representatives who will sit on certain village fono meetings where issues pertaining to women are discussed. They further recommended for the women's committee to be given legal recognition under the Village Fono Act to ensure their participation in significant village decisions or issues particularly relating to women. Lastly, there should be a legislation establishing public boards should include a provision to ensure gender equity or at least a stipulated number of female members.[5] The MWCSD addressed these in the new CSP 2016-2020 and Samoa National Policy for Gender Equality 2016-2020.

42. Please also refer to notes in Article 2, 3, 7, 10.

Article 5: Sex roles and stereotyping

Response to Concluding Observations 20 and 21

43. The MWCSD has taken a different approach in tackling the issue of domestic violence from targeting specific groups like women, men, children to a holistic approach as stated in the strategic outcomes of the draft Strategy for Family and Community Safety 2017-2021 which are;

- Transformed individual and community behaviour towards violence against all targeted persons.

[3] Internal Affairs Act 1995 (Samoa) s.15 in Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Final Report 17/16* (August 2016).

[4] Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Final Report 17/16* (August 2016).

[5] Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Final Report 17/16* (August 2016).

- Essential services for survivors are high quality, survivor-centred and well-coordinated between agencies, and include longer term rehabilitation services.
- Perpetrators of violence are held accountable for their actions and have access to rehabilitation activities/programs.

44. The strategy is accompanied by a plan of action which is divided into three key areas of 1) Prevention – Advocacy, Public Awareness and Education Programs; 2) Operational Response Systems; 3) Regulations, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Services for Survivors and Perpetrators. It is anticipated that this strategy will challenge the deeply-rooted socio-cultural norms and attitudes towards violent behaviour towards women and girls by involving both the men and women in collective family social program. An important aspect of this strategy is strengthening the interagency response system for survivors of violence to ensure immediate access to help is available.

45. The DFW in collaboration with its partners conducted public education programs targeting men, women, mothers and daughters, young couples, teen mums, village councils and women's committees promoting using effective communication skills to resolve family conflicts in a non-violent manner as well as capitalizing on the Community Conversation tool which is based on an interactive process of mutual observing, listening and making decisions collectively to address issues of gender inequality. This tool recognizes the capacity of communities to identify the needed changes, take ownership of the changes and transfer these changes to other communities. The programs reached 51,009 people (10,842 of which are men, 18,768 are women and 21,399 are not disaggregated.

46. All the programs have pre and post evaluation assessments to determine the intermediate results which show that 99% of participants understood their rights enshrined under CEDAW, preventive strategies such as communication and relationship building skills are essential prerequisites for developing and maintaining positive relationships with partners and children. Post test also indicate improved understanding of SRH rights especially amongst women and girls with regards to symptoms of STIS, access to family planning and other SRH rights. The MWCSD is working on improving its M & E systems by incorporating national and international indicators in relation to CEDAW in its Samoa National Policy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 and the draft Strategy for Family and Community Safety 2017-2021.

47. The UNWOMEN supported a media training in 2015 which was attended by 21 NUS Journalism students, 22 NGOs/female candidates and 6 media outlets in effectively shaping public perceptions of what a leader is and the importance of women's participation and representation in political processes as well as to ensure their reporting ahead of the election is gender-sensitive. Media coverage can, and often does, have an influence on voting communities in the lead up to the election.

Response to Concluding Observations 22 and 23

48. The enactment of the FSA 2013 and the establishment of the Family Court under the Family Court Act 2014 as a division of the District Court provide protection and recourse for victims of family violence. The FSA 2013 introduced protection orders which the victims can apply for against perpetrators of violence. Since 2013, 379 interim protection orders have been lodged with approximately 82% made permanent.[6] More importantly, the Family Court Act 2014 empowers the Court to use alternative dispute resolution to respond to family violence cases and substituting for formal judicial sentencing. Normally, the victim does not want the husband to be imprisoned because the family unit will be broken. Hence, the court ordering a Family Group Conference (FGC) for defendants who plead guilty to domestic violence charges. The FGC may involve the offender's family, village matai and church leaders and focuses on the offender acknowledging the offending, the causes of the offending

[6] Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Final Report* 17/16 (August 2016).

and finding ways to make amends with the assistance of his family unit. Upon completion of the FGC recommendations are made to the court on the way forward for the offender which is usually a referral to SVSG's perpetrator rehabilitation programs.[7] Hence, to ensure protection for victims and more importantly ensuring the perpetrators do not reoffend.

49. The SLRC report recommendations include awareness raising and important role of the village council and church leaders in changing the perceptions around family violence. This is through development of village by laws which is already being implemented to deal with perpetrators of domestic violence as well as playing a key role in enforcing protection orders. To date, a total of 17 (9 in Savaii, 8 in Upolu) village by-laws had been launched with more to be developed in the future and it prohibits physical and sexual violence against women with harsher penalties in place if the village laws are not observed.

50. The government supports the SVSG shelter through provision of land at Tuanaimato Upolu. the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI) provides the infrastructure for one shelter for women and another shelter for children whose parents or caregivers have been subjected to violence. The goals of the shelters include; protection and promotion of rights of child victims of violence, provision of temporary shelter care for victims of violence who cannot remain in their villages/families for risk of further violence, enhance their participation in programs for social, economic and political development, and engaging the civil society to effectively respond to cases of violence.

51. Counselling, rehabilitation programs and formal education are all provided by the SVSG for the sheltered victims to await their court case proceedings. While the costs for daily necessities were borne by the SVSG, the community including churches saw the importance of the NGO's work in addressing the human rights of these victims; they have actively become involved in making a difference in their lives. The ANZ Bank (Samoa) Ltd, BSP (Samoa and Government's Totalizator Agency Board (T.A.B) have been generous supporters in ensuring the victims of violence are well-supported, safe and in control of restoring their lives.[8] The SVSG Juniors are actively participating in caring for and organising rehabilitation programs for sheltered victims. The MWCSD with assistance from UNICEF under the GoS/UNICEF child protection program have provided financial assistance to support salaries for 3 staff at SVSG and rehabilitation program support for women and child victims in the last four years.

52. The SVSG initiated their public campaign against rape in 2010 which gained the support of the communities and led to the establishment of a community alert system which now involves 400 village representatives in 166 villages across Samoa.[9] Also, the 448 (197 are women) village representatives paid by the Government and coordinated under the Ministry of Women can report incidences of violence to the Police. This practice is aligned to provisions of the Family Safety Act 2013 where village representatives can act on behalf of the victim if they are unable to/ feel unsafe in reporting domestic violence cases.

53. The SVSG's 24-hour helpline was launched in 2013 and is staffed by 25 trained counsellors; it attracts calls from parents wanting help with their children, to children who cannot talk to their parents about their problems, to informers concerned about violence or even perpetrators asking for help.[10] Faataua le Ola, another active organisation that deals with mental health counselling services i.e. suicide prevention offers a 24 hour free call life line has been a long time partner for this Ministry for women and children's services. The Allied Health Professions Act 2014 will assist in formalizing some of the professional bodies who can provide counseling to victims.

[7] Ibid.

[8] www.samoavictimsupport.org/house-of-hope.html.

[9] Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development First Progress Report 2012-2015, p. 70.

[10] Ibid.

54. The SPC/RRRT funded training for police officers, members of government ministries and NGOs in November 2015, attended by 110 participants on the effective application of protection orders and referral systems for victims of violence. Outcomes of this training includes improved knowledge of law enforcement officers and those in the Law and Justice Sector in effectively handling complaints and processing protection orders from victims of violence in a timely manner.

55. The GoS with the assistance of international partners provided trainings for the judiciary since 2014. Tangible outcomes of these trainings include the establishment of Family Violence and the Drugs and Alcohol Courts (DAC). The SWSD under MWCSD funds a Case Management Officer at the DAC to play a leading role in working with the DAC clinician to deliver rehabilitation programs through therapeutic sessions and a 6 week psycho-educational programs (Toe Afua se Taeao Fou) targeting people who use substances, perpetrators of GBV, their families and communities. Since the program began in 2016, 28 male perpetrators of GBV, their families and communities completed the sessions. Also, the Case Management Officer counseled 82 male perpetrators, 23 of whom graduated and are now reintegrated with their families and communities. About 13 community leaders (church leaders, VWRS, family chiefs, VRS have volunteered and been very supportive of the programs. None of the men who came through the programs have reoffended.[11] Additional support from the Australian Federal Police (AFP) under the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Project (PPDVP) equips police officers with technical knowledge on how to handle victims of violence. Victims are given further protection through the Law and Justice Sector and SVSG project through a courts officer. This official is in charge of ensuring the victim's safety before, during and after court proceedings.

56. One of the NHRI's obligations includes informing people of their human rights and fostering understanding and respect for the rights of others. Ongoing human rights trainings for new police recruits attended by 72 (42% female, 58% male) in 2015 and 55 in 2016 with a gender breakdown of 18% female and 82% male. Similar trainings were conducted correction officers at Samoa Prisons and Correctional Services in 2016 attended by 30 officers, 27% of whom are female and 73% male.

57. Given the resources available, the GoS will not be able to establish shelters for victims of violence. Alternatively, it is using existing mechanisms like care provided by extended families, church and community leaders, a strategy widely supported by community leaders during the consultations.

58. The Law and Justice Sector is finalising the TORs for the tender process to invite interested bidders to design and develop a software for its centralized database – Auafa Mau which envisages containing ALL crime statistics. As such, the Ministry of Police has taken the lead in capturing data which has been disaggregated by sex, age, nationality and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator given that they are first point of contact for victims. This disaggregated system is relatively new, with the system being designed and adopted in 2010.

59. A total of 198 sexual crimes were reported to the MOP from 2012-2015 with females being the victims. All the victims are of Samoan nationality with only two being Samoa/Philippines and Samoa/Australia/United Kingdom. When disaggregated by age, 6% of the victims are aged below 12 years, 53% aged over 12 years and less than 16 years, 25% aged over 16 years and less than 21 years and 16% aged over 21 years. The relationship between victim and suspect for the age group below 12 years and over 21 years is usually a Stranger while those over 12 and less than 16 years is normally those in boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. The suspects of the cases affecting victims aged over 16 and less than 21 years are those who know the victims and have spoken to them or also know the suspects as their friends.

[11] SWSD Six Months Progress Report Jan-June 2016, p. 13.

60. The number of outreach programs, multi-media campaigns and ongoing trainings on violence elimination attribute to the increase in reported cases as shown in statistics below.

Number of matters received by the Police, Domestic Violence Unit

2012	2013	2014	2015
200	433	522	723

Source: Domestic Violence Unit, Ministry of Police, 2016

61. Statistics show the increase of reported domestic violence cases in Samoa with the number in 2012-2015 more than tripled with most of the cases coming through the Family Court show females as victims. From this number, 707 cases proceeded to court with 608 resulting in convictions. The average length of sentence varies from 9 months for suspended sentence, 12 months for imprisonment and other orders like supervision, fines, community work ranging from 94 hours to 9 months.

62. The table in Appendix 3 and 4 shows that females aged 21-30 years (36.20%) and 31-40 years (28.54%) are mainly the victims of reported domestic violence cases with most of these (1590 cases) perpetuated by partners/spouse. A total of 1262 cases were caused by other family member, 325 happened between child and parents, 138 affecting Separated/Divorced with the least (34) involving people in previous relationships. The offenders are mostly males aged 21-30 years (38.22%) and males aged 31-40 years (33.38%).

63. Sexual violence relates to the sexual crimes provided in Part 7 of the Crimes Act 2013 and sexual offences reported between 2008-2015 shows that indecent assault (34%) and rape (26%) were the two most common types of sexual offences reported. Other offences include attempted rape at 11%, sexual intercourse with a girl over 12 years but under 16 years at 9%, incest at 7% while carnal knowledge, sexual intercourse with a girl under 12 years and other types of offences remain at 4% each. The Act provides for increase in penalties for sexual related offences from maximum of 10 years to 14 years imprisonment to adequately reflect the seriousness of the offences, also made it an offence for a person to be convicted of sexual violation of another person not withstanding that those persons were married to each other at the time. Lastly, provided that sexual violation in the form of unlawful sexual connection with another person without the consent of that person does not require penetration is regarded as a crime.[12]

Further progress on implementation

64. Samoa acknowledges that lack of statistical data regarding prevalence of domestic violence and its nature, extent and causes. However, the Family Safety Study – a comprehensive assessment of the current situation of domestic violence and GBV in Samoa, including the extent to which existing programs and services are addressing the problem, and the impacts of the 2013 Family Safety Act began in August 2016 led by the MWCSD. The study findings will present recommendations for family safety and prevention of GBV and to inform program and policy interventions as well as required services to redress domestic violence. Recommendations should address the specific issues and needs of different client groups including victims and perpetrators, women, men and children, people with disabilities and the elderly. This study is expected to be completed and launched by July 2017.

65. In December 2016, the NHRI launched their National Inquiry with a focus on 'Violence in the Samoan home' be it in the extended communal setting or the small unit. The primary focus will be on women and girls with attention also on the role and impact of violence on children as they grow up. This will be implemented from January to December 2017 which includes village and district consultations, public hearings, written submissions and desktop research. The inquiry aims to foster a national dialogue in identifying the root

[12] Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Final Report 17/16* (August 2016).

causes of violence, the impacts on those involved, human rights which are violated, and make suitable recommendations to address the problem. At the conclusion of the inquiry, a report of the findings and recommendations will be submitted to Parliament for consideration and discussion. This is funded by GoS, with assistance from UNDP, UNWOMEN and Asia Pacific Forum (AFP).

66. The Interagency Taskforce for Ending Violence under MWCSD was established in March 2017 to complement and support a well-functioning and responsive Interagency Prevention and Response Systems for Ending Violence [13]. The committee consists of representatives of relevant government ministries, NGOs, faith based organizations, community representatives from the Social sector. The committee is chaired by an NGO representative and meets on a quarterly basis. It provides policy and program oversight for the implementation of the Strategy for Safer Families, Stronger Communities 2017-2021 once implemented.

67. The MWCSD continues to promote the implementation of the National Weaving Program to sustain one of Samoa's national treasures "the le Sae- Finemat" and to earn income. The men are heavily involved in the preparation stages of the pandanus leaf which demonstrates a collective effort and non-stereotypical view of the roles of men and women. To date, a total of 769 women and 3 men are registered as the most skilled weavers for such a fine artisan cultural product. Since Financial Year 2014/2015 to March 2017, women from both rural and urban areas earned a total of SAT194, 950.00 which has been used for building family houses, paying water and electricity expenses, school obligations for children and others.

68. The SLRC report recommends the implementation of public education and awareness programs relating to domestic violence, anger management, alcohol and drugs abuse, and rehabilitation programs for inmates to change their negative behaviours and refrain from reoffending. This recommendation is being considered in the Strategy for Safer Families, Stronger Communities 2017-2021. The MWCSD is supporting the remuneration of a Case Management Officer at the Drugs and Alcohol Court which is discussed in detail in Section 49. Also, the MWCSD supported the establishment of the Toomaga o Aiga, a new NGO of dedicated women focusing on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, girls and other members of our society through awareness and educational programs, research, advocacy and policy work. In addition, the Samoa Prisons and Correctional Services (SPCS) conducted a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) which informed Rehabilitation and Reintegration programs for both male and female prisoners commencing in Financial Year 2015/2016. The TNA identified that 65% of prisoners range from age groups 20-39 years old with 82% completing as far as primary or secondary education. The prisoners indicated anger, alcohol, financial limitations and others as contributing factors to offending behaviour. Therefore, the SPCS implement motivational programs where prisoners both male and female set goals for themselves aiming for a better and offending free future and instil in them the significance of the brother sister covenant which applies to any Samoan male and female whereby the males should be the protectors of females so as to change their mentality and not to commit crimes against women and girls such as sexual offences and physical assault. Moreover, vocational and certification programs are conducted and women specifically are engaged in sewing and cooking programs, floral arrangements, screen printing and handicraft making, hence upon release they can easily find a job or use these skills to earn income.

Remaining challenges

69. The GoS acknowledges that there still is a long way for Samoa to go in regards to being fully gender focused in its policies, strategies, programs and there continues to be challenging attitudes of our people towards gender equality and violence against women and girls. Such challenges can be transformed and the number of community engagement

[13] MWCSD 2016-2021: Community Development Sector Plan, p. 12.

conversations, programs, village planning tools and communication mediums taken in the past and new initiatives currently undertaken hopefully will lead to more positive changes in knowledge, behaviour and attitudes.

70. Please also refer to articles 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Article 6: Exploitation of women

Response to Concluding Observations 24 and 25

71. In December 2016, the Samoa Key Population Mapping Study funded by UNDP Global Fund findings was released and it was the first official documentation reporting on the prevalence of prostitution in Samoa. 12 women (sex workers) who work from public spaces around town, but are likely to also work via mobile phones, at tourist sites and in villages participated in the behavioural survey. They are aged between 18-46 years, 58.3% had children, 8 were unemployed while 4 noted sewing and flower arrangement as their form of employment, some of them first began sex work at ages 13 to 21 years. Most women were educated up to secondary level and do sex work for economic reasons with payments varying from SAT50.00 to SAT200.00. Only 33% of the participants used a condom on the last occasion of vaginal intercourse with a client while majority were inconsistent condom users with the clients in the last 12 months. None of the women had accessed a sexual health service in the last 12 months, although 60% had been given condoms in that period. None had been tested for HIV in the previous 12 months.[14] Addressing the SRH needs of sex workers is now included in the draft HIV/AIDS and STI Policy 2017-2021 currently being developed by the Ministry of Health (MOH). The MWCSD is supporting the economic vulnerability of vulnerable populations including women, young people, persons with disabilities, sex workers and others through the Small Business Incubator (SBI) and Supporting Vulnerable Populations into Jobs.

72. There have been no official reports of cases of trafficking from the period of 2012 – 2017.

Further progress on implementation

73. Prostitution is criminalised in Samoa, punishable by 3 years imprisonment. Solicitation defined as where a person offers or agrees to pay for sexual intercourse is also an offence punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment. However, the Act provides that a male cannot be convicted of solicitation in respect of any sexual intercourse or connection with his wife. Moreover, it is not an offence to procure a woman or girl to have sexual intercourse with her husband. Living on the earnings of the prostitution of another person, and the procurement of any woman or girl to have sexual intercourse with any male are also offences, punishable by 10 years and 7 years imprisonment respectively. The penalties have increased from 3 years by the *Crimes Act 2013*.[15]

74. "Part XIII of the Crimes Act 2013 introduced new offences specifically targeting exploitation through trafficking. The Act criminalises trafficking in people by coercion or deception, and also creates a specific offense for dealing with a person under 18 for sexual exploitation, forced labour or the removal of body parts. These offences are punishable by up to 14 years imprisonment".[16]

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[14] Heather Worth, Patrick Rawstorne, Hillary Gorman, Michelle O'Connor, Scott McGill, Karen McMillan, 2016. *Pacific Multi-Country Mapping and Behavioural Study HIV & STI Risk Vulnerability among Key Populations – Samoa*, p. 8.

[15] Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Final Report 17/16* (August 2016).

[16] Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Final Report 17/16* (August 2016).

75. In addition, the Office of the Regulator is developing the Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) Policy whose objective is to implement a filter system as a form of response to combat the exploitation of children through the means of distributing and accessing CSAM on the internet. Hence, to look into means of addressing the issue of indecent material inclusive of materials exploiting children particularly girls via internet. The Samoa National Cybersecurity Strategy 2016-2021 launched by Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in early 2017 provides the framework for national level efforts to secure a safe environment for digital citizens of Samoa including women and girls to eliminate cyber threats and attacks and to promote cyber security.

Part II

Participation and equality in political and public life, representation and nationality

Article 7: Participation in political and public life

Response to Concluding Observations 26 and 27

76. The *Constitutional Amendment Act 2013* establishes a quota system for representation of women in Parliament, which may be considered a temporary special measure. This quota requires 10 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly to be reserved for women. The quota was implemented for the first time in Samoa's 2016 elections. 2 of the 5 women are cabinet ministers whilst the remaining women parliamentarians sit on parliamentary committees.

77. The Increasing Political Participation of Women in Samoa (IPPWS) jointly funded by UNDP and SWSD aims to increase community awareness of the importance of ensuring women are able to influence the national development processes through increasing their opportunities for political leadership; work with women candidates to strengthen their capacity; and work with political parties to raise awareness on gender issues. The IPPWS supported three capacity development workshops and one on one consultation for 19 female candidates prior to the 2016 general elections including how to effectively run clean campaigns led by women for women. 7 of the candidates are determined to contest in the 2021 general elections and are contesting the 2016 elections as trial run for them and their campaign committees.[17]

78. Overall, the IPPWS mass media campaign, community outreach and capacity building trainings have impacted on the increase in the number of women candidates in the 2016 general elections, standing at 24 compared to 8 in 2011. 5/24 women succeeded in the 2016 general elections which saw the increase of women representation in Parliament from 6.1% (3 out of 49) to 10% (5 out of 50). Moreover, there is increase in the number of votes casted for women which have increased from 1308 votes in 2016 compared to 4,500 in 2011. The number of females registered for the general elections also increased from 48,195 in 2011 to 55,695 in 2016.[18]

79. Community outreach activities were jointly implemented by NGOs and Government. The NCW implemented IPPWS activities in conjunction with the programme 'Women Leading the End of Violence against Women' using the TLM methodology, as per its commitment to SWSD. 41 villages were targeted from August to December 2015 reaching

[17] IPPWS 3rd Quarterly Report, October-December 2015.

[18] Terminal Evaluation of the IPPWS Project Draft Final Report, September 2016, p. 42 and 43.

17-14265

44,201 people, of which 15,345 are women, 9,077 are men, 10,743 are youth and 9,036 are children.[19]

80. The SUNGO on the other hand, implemented outreach programs for 50 villages in collaboration with the Office of the Electoral Commissioner (OEC) particularly in the areas of Voters Education and changes in the Constitution and Electoral Law. The number of people reached was reportedly more than 500. Reports show that the programmes produced significant positive results in terms of increased information and awareness on issues such as right to vote, women's political participation and eligibility to become MPs.[20]

81. Samoa's legislation which governs political participation at national level does not discriminate against women. For example, the *Electoral Act 1963* provides for universal suffrage and applies equally to men and women, giving all citizens over the age of 21 the right to vote for the Legislative Assembly. The *Electoral Act* also provides the criteria required for candidates to stand for election to the Parliament. To be eligible a candidate must hold a *chiefly* title, and his or her application must be accompanied by a declaration by the village representative from the village that the title comes from, certifying that he or she meets residency (in Samoa) and service (to the village) requirements. This criterion applies to both men and women. However, we acknowledge that this is indirect discrimination and a restriction on women's participation at the national political sphere as fewer women hold chiefly titles compared to men. However, we are not ready to change this criterion due to our customs and traditions but we are trying hardly through other avenues like the Constitutional Amendment Act 2013.

82. All 50 new MPs received basic training in Gender and SGD 5: Gender Equality after elections in 2016 while 5 of 49 MPs received training in Gender and Women's Representation in Parliament and political parties despite all of them being invited.

Further progress on implementation

83. The Samoa Census Report 2011 shows that out of the total population of Samoa (187,820), 16,787 people hold *matai* titles, with 89% being male and 11% being female. Research carried out by the Centre of Samoan Studies at the National University of Samoa found that women comprised only 5.5% (735) of all village-based matai, They further found that 21 out of 275 villages or sub-villages in Samoa do not permit women to hold a *matai* title, affecting the ability of women to stand for election in 16 out of 41 constituencies. Although some villages in Samoa prohibit women to hold matai titles but conversely Samoa's legislation which governs political participation at national level does not discriminate against women. For instance, the *Electoral Act 1963* provides for universal suffrage and applies equally to men and women, giving all citizens over the age of 21 the right to vote. Moreover provides criteria required for any candidate to hold a matai title and certified by a VR or VWR from the village in order to stand for election. Although some villages prohibit women to become matais, they can acquire matai titles from other villages where their ancestors originate from. Although there are no formal barriers preventing women from entering into politics, the patriarchal mindset and socio-cultural barriers that encourage such mindset makes it difficult for women to be on the same level.

84. In contrast, the MWCSD Women Matai and Leadership Survey 2015 revealed that 76% of women who hold matai titles do participate in village council meetings with only 7 villages still maintaining respect and observing the traditional taboos established by their ancestors. Survey findings reveal that women have the highest regard in Samoan society which is evident in 53% of all women who have been bestowed matai titles have high chief titles. Of the 151 villages in Samoa where women hold a matai title (72 villages in Upolu and

[19] SWSD Quarterly Report, 2016.
[20] Ibid.

79 in Savaii), 115 villages have women participating in village council meetings.[21] However, the decision to participate or not to participate is due to personal reasons as captured in the survey; like relationship between the brother and sister covenant concerning the language used during village council meetings especially when sensitive issues like rape and incest are discussed which might offend the women, village taboo prohibiting women from participating in village council. Findings from the survey are being used by the MWCSD to inform the development of its Inclusive Governance Strategy 2016 to ensure gender is mainstreamed in governance at the national level. The MWCSD in March 2017 started with the implementation of developing District Development Plans which is one of the key tools for delivery the governance strategy and have specific focuses on increasing participation of women in village decision making forums and village development committee bodies. As well as ending violence against women, economic empowerment, health and education concerns. Four pilot districts have started since March, with the intention to improve the social and economic outcomes of districts building on their strengths and facilitating training and client focused public services to ensure community ownership and sustainability of initiatives.

85. Villages often have Village Women's Committees that play significant roles in village administration, though these committees are not specifically recognized in statute. Data from the MWCSD indicate that a total of 195 village women committees are in operation. Although village women's committee are not recognized by statute but on the contrary these women's committee have village women representatives that are mandated under the MOWA 2009 to promote the advancement of women in her village through the implementation, coordination and monitoring and evaluation of, and provision of assistance to, all programmes, activities and development projects for women that are economically viable, socially beneficial, culturally appropriate and environmentally sensitive and all other responsibilities specify under the Act. This provides equal opportunities for both VRs and VWRs to participate in village political discussions and administration of their own respective villages.

86. The Political Representation and Women's Empowerment Survey Report 2015 conducted by the National University of Samoa shows that a total of 45 traditional villages and non-traditional villages that do not allow women to be given a *saofai* (matai title bestowment ceremony) for a matai title as in the table below. Correspondingly, a total of 48 villages (41 traditional villages and 7 non-traditional villages) that women matai are not allowed to participate in village fono or village council meetings as in table in Appendix 5 and 6. This is affecting the ability of women matai to formally and informally discourage to participate in village council meetings and to run as a candidate for election.

87. Women's involvement in government, policy making or in participation in non-Government organizations is not restricted by legislation. In practice, women are engaged in employment at equal or greater rates than men, and the numbers in leadership positions have been steadily growing in three consecutive financial years as shown in the graphs in Appendix 7. (Please note that numbers on graph are exact numbers not %). The steady increase in the number of females holding senior government positions indicate that women contribute immensely to national level decision making as well as having the ability to access higher form of employment including running for Parliament. The *Public Service Act 2004* mandates employment in the Public Service to be governed by merit and not affected by gender. Furthermore, the Public Service Commission is mandated to ensure equal opportunity in employment for all.

88. According to data and information from the Ministry of Finance as the regulatory body for 25 state owned enterprises indicates that 18 percent of board members are women. Furthermore only 2 out of the 25 State Owned Enterprises are chaired by women. This is significantly low compared to the number of women who are excelling in other areas of decision making spheres.

[21] Women: Matai and Leadership Survey, MWCSD, 2015, p. 8.

89. The table in Appendix 8 indicates in bold italic font the number of women and men who sit in boards and confirms a huge disparity in the number of women in higher level decision making compared to men.

Article 8: International representation

90. There are no legislative barriers to women participating and representing government at the international level in diplomatic posts. Decisions about how Samoa is represented internationally are made by way of political appointments by Cabinet. The officers (for example the first secretary) of the mission are also endorsed by Cabinet. In relation to delegations of Government officials or non-Government officials representing Samoa at the international level, there is no apparent legal impediment on the selection of a delegation. Despite the absence of legislative barriers, 7 out of 9 diplomatic missions are headed by men as Ambassadors, Consul Generals or High Commissioners with 2 missions headed by women. Of the 13 officers currently posted overseas, 8 are female and 5 are male.

91. Women and men have the same opportunity to represent Samoa in international conferences and trainings such as the annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, Triennial Conferences, Commonwealth Women's Forum, human rights reporting like Universal Periodic Report, CRC, CEDAW to name a few. Representatives to these international events included young women, women with disabilities, women from NGOs and women from grassroots level. The same applies in the area of sports where equal opportunities are available for both males and females. Samoan sports women at elite levels continue to excel in their chosen sport and are afforded opportunities to travel and compete in international events. Samoa's first Olympian ever to be awarded a silver medal happened to be female as a result of her competing in the weightlifting category in the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. Special Olympics World Games held in Los Angeles in 2015 whereby twenty eight (28) athletes, 50% of which were females competed. Samoa now have paid top women administrators as Chief Executive Officers in Rugby League, Rugby, English Cricket, Soccer which are always traditionally male dominated. The establishment of the Women in Sport Commission under the umbrella of the Samoa Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee (INC) is timely and apt to promote equal opportunities for girls and women in physical and sports activities.

92. The GoS hosted the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from 1-4 September 2014 in Apia, on the theme of 'The Sustainable Development of SIDS Through Genuine and Durable Partnerships.' In parallel with plenary discussions, six multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogues took place on the themes of: sustainable economic development; climate change and disaster risk management (DRM); social development, health and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), youth and women; sustainable energy; oceans, seas and biodiversity; and water and sanitation, food security and waste management. Twenty-one heads of state and government and 3,500 delegates attended the conference, including representatives from government, the private sector and civil society. The conference was also an occasion to highlight the cultural traditions of the host country, Samoa, and other island nations, with daily displays of traditional dance, textiles, woodcarving and other crafts in the 'SIDS Village' located at the conference venue which were managed by the majority of women entrepreneurs.

93. The Third International Conference on SIDS produced an outcome document, titled 'SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.' The document was negotiated during the preparatory process at UN Headquarters in New York and was adopted without further discussion during the closing plenary on Thursday, 4 September 2014. Gender equality and rights are recognized in the SAMOA Pathway as transformative drivers of sustainable development. To empower women as agents of change, the document supports eliminating gender discrimination and violence, integrating gender perspectives into sustainable development, and enabling equal access to education, health and work opportunities. The

Pathway also promotes continued measures and targets to ensure women's participation in leadership decision-making at all levels, and in both the public and private spheres. Finally, the Pathway supports the human rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women in SIDS, in accordance with existing international agreements.

94. Similarly, GoS again hosted the Commonwealth 11th Women Affairs Ministers Meeting (11WAMM) in September 2016 on the theme, "Gender equality through sustainable development in an inclusive Commonwealth". It provides the opportunity for ministers, senior officials, civil society, private sector and partner agencies to discuss critical issues in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in areas of climate change, leadership, violence against women and girls, and intergenerational partnerships for sustainable development. Delegations from 14 member countries participated. The Road to Apia as it was titled concluded with a Communiqué where ministers agreed on four priority areas for action which includes women's economic empowerment, women in leadership, ending violence against women and girls, ending violence against women and girls and gender and climate change. This contributes to the setting of Commonwealth priorities and the global agenda for sustainable and inclusive development in pursuance of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

Article 9: Nationality

95. The *Citizenship Act 2004* governs rights of women and men to acquire change or retain their nationality, and the criteria for nationality of children. The language in the Act is gender neutral and women have the same rights as men in regards to their own nationality and the nationality of their children, irrespective of their marital status. Furthermore, dissolution of marriage does not affect a woman's nationality. The same Act was amended in 2016 and allows for anyone both male and female to claim citizenship through a parent even if that person does not reside in Samoa.

Part III

Education, equal access, opportunities and conditions in relation to employment, health, social and economic development and rural women

Article 10: Education

Response to Concluding Observations 28 and 29

96. The GoS remains committed to ensuring education is accessible to women and young girls. Such is institutionally facilitated through amendments made to existing legislative and policy frameworks, to support Government's holistic approach to implementing activities. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC), continues to lead an array of initiatives as speculated under the *Education Act 2009*.Compulsory education has been a requirement of law since 2009, requiring children aged 5 to14 years to attend school. Currently, considerations are made for legislative amendments to require that children aged 3 to 5years, attend pre-schools or early childhood education. School attendance, withdrawals or unexplained absences from school are directly monitored by the responsible school administration (principal and staff) and communicated to the MESC for record. Assistance in this respect is also provided by the network of male and female VRs who are MWCSD liaison officers and/or the MOP decision pertaining to the expulsion of a student from school is legislatively left to the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the MESC. Further to this, the CEO also has the power to revoke a decision to expel if such a decision was made by a subordinate on the basis that he/she is satisfied an expelled student remains willing to attend school and transform his/her inner self. For various reasons, however, some school-

aged children have dropped out of school and in an effort to prevent this, the MESC through the support of the Australian and New Zealand Governments, had introduced the Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme which provides free education for students in Year 1 up to Year 11. The increase of net enrolments for primary school female students from 17,911 in 2012 to 19,087 in 2016 shows the number of female beneficiaries under this scheme. This scheme however does not extend to private/church schools. Since the scheme began in 2010, 198 students are reported to have attended school for the first time which is progress that Government appreciates. The GoS has fully absorbed into national budgetary expenditure the costs for the grant scheme since 2015 for Primary level schools, whilst similar arrangements are expected in 2017 for College level.

97. Previously, concerns have been raised over instances whereby impregnated young girls have been expelled or prohibited from re-entering school during pregnancy or after child birth. Such practice by school administrators (school principals) is said to be a more common occurrence in Colleges rather than Tertiary institutions mainly fuelled by fear that it gives a bad image of the schools or that it will influence other female students to follow suit and such is tolerated in schools. Similarly, the parents/families of impregnated girls may choose to discontinue their daughter's education in fear of stigmatization or see that withdrawal from school may serve to teach their daughter a life lesson.

98. Culturally and systematically this matter gives rise to complex challenges in Samoa's context. In recognition of such however, Government continues its commitment to compulsory access to education by creating enabling mechanisms through law and policy, to strengthen the regulatory powers of Government agencies in keeping young girls (and women) in schools regardless of circumstance. To date, any student young or otherwise can legally access all levels education without systematic bias or constraint, as specified in the Education Act. Further to this, the MESC has developed a National Safe School's Policy, which essentially aims to provide a positive learning environment for all students and now incorporates provisions to protect impregnated students from expulsion and that they are given full support by the school and family during pregnancy as well as securing their return to school after child birth. This is welcomed progress particularly for the MWCSD which initiated this policy advice for action in 2015, in its role to protect the interests of children and rights of women and young girls. This policy extends to include a prohibition of violence which may involve students with regards to; bullying and more specifically *cyber* bullying, instances of sexual harassment or abuse, as well as removing stigmatization of learner pregnancy. The NVFSP establishes reporting mechanisms for incidences of violence involving students hence, students, teachers and the community alike, may report any such cases to the MESC and/or the Ministry of Police. To assist, School Inspectors and School Principals are given the responsibility to monitor the local implementation of this policy and report to the School Operations Division of the MESC. Addressing social/cultural stigma about young pregnancies is a continuous undertaking that is approached through the conduct of community-based outreach programs and forums for parents and young girls which serve as platforms for discussing such sensitive issues but also as fitting avenues to create awareness for available and/or appropriate assistance with information and services as needed. Workshops and trainings on CEDAW and CRC are also conducted for awareness creation particularly with focus on health, education, economic empowerment, leadership and decision making, prevention of gender based violence and general well-being for the affected young girls and families. To date, 87 programs were conducted in the 2012/2013 Financial Year compared to 2,988 in the 2015/2016 Financial Year where women and girls participated.

99. The GoS is fortunate to have the support of its bilateral and multilateral partners which continue to provide opportunities for all Samoans (males and females) to apply for and be sponsored by various countries through different scholarship schemes. The number of scholarship awards for both females and males has increased over the period 2013-2015 with a slight decrease in 2016 for both genders under the New Zealand AID, Australian AID. The number of scholarships awarded to females over the past four years has increased compared to

males, in particular females' interest to pursue Science courses where 59% of Science awards for 2013 were taken up by females while only 41% were awarded to males. The same trend was seen in 2016 with females taking up 53% of Science awards compared to males' at 47%. The table shown in Appendix 13 shows that the number of females in all three broad categories has improved in numbers for period 2013 to 2016.

100. Career Days or Open days as they are better known, has been the forte of Post School Education and Training (PSET) educational institutions namely the National University of Samoa (NUS) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). Such are hosted on a six-month basis throughout an academic year which serves to provide current or aspiring university students to with the information necessary to shape and inform their career choices in addition to assisting them identify their areas of interest and/or course to study. At each event, public and private sector agencies are invited to set up booths and/or conduct presentations or demonstrations of the work they carry out each day. Since the inception of the Samoa Qualifications Authority (SQA), they have led a Career Advisory Service (CAS) which has extended the concept of "career day" into colleges. Since 2013, 8 CAS programs were conducted covering all 40 Secondary schools in Samoa with a total of 3,153 senior students participating in last year's visit. In 2015, 4 national career days were conducted which was attended by 431 secondary students in Upolu and 229 in Savaii. Similar programs were conducted in 2016 which was attended by 300 students in Upolu and 188 in Savaii. These contributed to the increase of female enrolment at APTC in the Pacific with 326 females compared to 287 males from 2012-2014 as reported in Samoa's UN CEDAW Follow Up procedure report in 2015.

101. The Education Act 2009 requires the Principal and Management Authority of a school to provide a productive and safe teaching and learning environment for all its students fostering mutual respect.[22] Educational institutions are obligated to comply with the law and Government's stance to illegalize any form of corporal punishment which may cause harm to, humiliate (or inflicted with intent to humiliate) a student. Schools are further encouraged to have a disciplinary policy in place to further guide teachers and further strengthen the expressly prohibition of corporal punishment at school or during any activity organised by a school.[23]

102. The Safe Schools Committee chaired by the Honourable Minister of MESC was formed to address inter school violence in Samoa given the incidents of school brawls in public places last year. The taskforce comprises of government, traditional and church leaders in an effort to adopt a multi-sector approach to addressing violence in schools or violence by schools. Further to this, the Safe schools policy provides for prevention initiatives and behaviour management guidelines for teachers. The anticipated Child Care and Protection Bill extends to also cover anti-violence initiatives with particular regards for protecting young girls and boys from sexual violence and abuse either within the confines of the schools or home with marked implications on an attending student on rural and urban villages across Samoa.

Further progress on implementation

Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education

103. The net enrolment rate of officially primary school age group in Samoa in 2012 is 36,507 and has increased to 39,281 (an increase of 2774) in 2016. When disaggregated by gender, the total number of female enrolment in 2012 of 17,911 increased to 19,087 in 2016 while enrolment for males has increased by 1,608 students from 18,586 in 2011 to 20,194 in 2016. The net enrolment rate (Annex 1) has been consistently high for males since 2012, indicating more official school aged males enrolled in primary education. This enrolment rate

[22] Education Act 2009, s.22.

[23] Ibid, s.23 (3) (4).

has reversed the trend as reported in Samoa's previous report in 2009 where it reported that enrolment was dominated by females in all levels. It is assumed that the reverse pattern is due to the enforcement of the Education Act 2009 as well as the assistance rendered by the Government of Samoa and Samoa School Fees Grant Scheme (SSFGS). Figure 1 and 2 (Annex) portray the net school enrolments by level and gender in 2012 in comparison to 2016 for both primary and secondary education.

104. Statistics show that more girls stay in secondary education while many males prefer to move on to vocational institutions. The total net enrolment rate in secondary education ranges between 68% and 70% over the past five year period, with the lowest recorded in 2013. The low range suggests the low participation range of students of the official secondary school age (13-17 years old) attending secondary education. It is assumed that some repeat Year 8 while others register at vocational institutions.

105. Also, on average, the transition rates by gender fluctuate over the years across all year levels. Most of the transition rates are above 85%, which indicates that almost all students transit to the next year level. From Year 8 to Year 9, more females transit to the secondary level than males and this trend is consistent in all year levels. (Please refer to statistics in Annex 11).

106. Overall, there is a high transition rate from primary level to secondary level, however it decreases as it moves to the secondary level with a higher decrease in transition rate for females than males particularly Year 11-12 and Year 12-13 ranging from 11% for males to 12% for females in 2010-2011 to 24% for males and 37% for females in 2015 respectively. This corresponds to the high dropout rates in the secondary level as more and more students move out of the education system.

107. Over the years, dropout rates across all year levels for both females and males fluctuate with a high dropout rate for males than females in Year 1-Year 2 and Year 8-year 9. More males dropout of the secondary level than females across the years with the Year 12 – Year 13 experiencing the highest number with males increasing from 29% in 2010-2011 to 36% in 2014-2015 while females increasing from 25% to 32%. It assumes that more males dropout of the education system and progress to vocational schools to continue their studies. Low dropout rates seen in Year 11-Year 12 is due to some colleges not having Year 11, however, students can progress straight from Year 10 to Year 12. Statistics show that dropout rate of 14% for males in 2010-2011 for Year 8 – Year 9 decreased by 50% in 2014-2015. Similarly, female dropout rates for the same Year Level for the same period dropped from 10% to 4%.

Tertiary level enrolment

108. In relation to concerns from the Committee regarding the lack of information on tertiary enrolment, we wish to provide the following updates; the total number of students enrolled at the NUS continues to increase from 15,673 for the period 2012-2014 with an added 5,623 enrolments for 2015. These consist of students from the Institute of Higher Education and Institute of Technology with females continuing to dominate enrolments in all fields of study. As reported in Samoa's Follow Up Procedure report in 2015, females dominated enrolments with a total of 8810 compared to males amounting to 6,863 from 2012-2014. In 2015, 5,623 students enrolled which again saw dominance of females with 3,366 compared to 2,257 males. While the number of students enrolling at NUS continues to increase, the trend of less students enrolling in Semester 2 compared to Semester 1 remains up to 2015. The trend reported in Samoa's Follow Up in 2015 of males dominating enrolments in the Faculty of Education has reversed in 2015 with 548 females enrolling in both semesters compared to only 267 males. Females continue to be well represented in Commerce, Arts, Science and Nursing fields while males are prominent in Samoan studies. The transition rate from degree level to special degree courses such as Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies, Nursing, Education, Science and Samoan Studies continue to be dominated by

females with 68 enrolling in 2015 compared to 41 males. Only 2 females and no males enrolled for PHD level in 2015 given the availability of courses locally.

109. The Australian Pacific Technical College consists of 4 other branches scattered in the Pacific this includes Pacific island countries like Vanuatu, Fiji, PNG and Samoa with a total of 613 Samoan students enrolling in one of these 4 campuses from 2012-2014. 14 of the 39 courses are traditionally male dominated fields of study with 287 males particularly for trades such as carpentry, construction and fabrication. In contrast, 326 females enrolled and the highest female participation is seen in A Certificate in Disability and Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care and Allied Health.

110. The SQA with its PSET skills program enforces the standards and qualifications in accordance with the national needs. As reported in Samoa's UN CEDAW Follow Up Procedure Report 2015, a total of 4,280 students enrolled in 18 PSET providers in 2011. It increased to 5,259 in 2012 but decreased to 4,677 students (an 11% decrease) in 2013. 59% of students of Year 13 in 2012 were reported to have enrolled in a PSET course/program the following year. The number of PSET graduates increased rapidly after 2009 with the highest number recorded in 2011 of 1,872 graduates. 32% fewer graduates were reported the following year before increasing again in 2013 with 1,546 students (23% increase from 2012) awarded with PSET qualifications. The NUS remains the largest provider of formal PSET in Samoa enrolling 62% of students of which females outnumber the males. The male concentration on traditional TVET trades fields such as Architecture and Building as well as Engineering and Related Technologies remains. However, female students were five times more likely to enrol in PSET programmes under the Food, Hospitality and Personal Services fields than male students in 2013.

111. As reported in the CEDAW Follow Up Procedure Report the increase in transition rates from college to tertiary is attributed to programs by MESC to improve the quality of teaching including training to upgrade content knowledge, training in pedagogy, training by subject clusters amongst others. Moreover, by 2014, a total of 60 Scholarship opportunities were awarded to Science teachers by the USP to upgrade to a Bachelor's degree level.

112. The MESC is responsible for sports and cultural activities and provides leadership in research, policy development and implementation. Opportunities are available for women to participate in organised sports at club levels. These include; non-traditional sporting fields featuring the participation of women and girls like archery, weightlifting, hockey, rugby to name a few. In 2016, Samoa fielded the first school rugby League match for young women and now opportunities exist through Secondary schools to play rugby league through the National Rugby league (NRL). Another achievement is the inclusion of the Health and Physical Education (HPE) subject as an examinable subject on the Samoa School Certificate Examination and the Pacific Senior School Certificate in 2009 and 2010 consecutively which is a measure to promote women's participation in sports. Further to these, it is significant to note that Samoa through SASNOC now provides a compensation scheme for sports-injuries for a period of one year offered to a registered athlete (both female and male) for local or international treatment as is necessary and/or upon approval by Cabinet to do so.

113. Women are increasingly engaged in physical and recreational opportunities that exist within villages and at the national level. These opportunities include community based volleyball, netball, aerobic/zumba activities, touch rugby, soccer, basketball and so forth. The sports clubs and church groups are very active in mobilising the young people in recreational sports activities.

Article 11: Women and employment

Response to Concluding Observations 30 and 31

114. The Labour and Employment Relations Act 2013 (LERA) promotes women's rights in employment, equal remuneration, maternity leave and protection from workplace discrimination and harassment. Maternity leave for the private sector provides either; 6 weeks of which 4 weeks are paid in full or alternatively, 6 weeks for which she receives two-thirds of her normal salary. In general however, paternity leave provides a standardised entitlement of 5 fully paid days. Part time employees are also entitled to maternity leave but are currently not on par with the entitlements for permanent staff. However, the GoS will be discussing this issue during the review of the LERA in Financial Year 2016/2017.

115. The LERA 2013 stipulates provisions that contribute to minimizing the gap between men and women particularly Section 19: Prohibition of sex discrimination in employment and Section 20 subsections (2) and (4): Fundamental rights and principles. Also, the MCIL conducts regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure employers are complying with their obligations. Awareness programs are also conducted to engage employers and employees on employment and labour laws while also providing an opportunity to voice their concerns to each other.

116. The Public Service Commission (PSC) through the Public Service Act 2004 and Policies (Working Conditions and Entitlements Manual – WCE) reviewed its policy to comply with ILO and CEDAW to increase the maternity leave entitlement to 26 weeks of which 12 weeks are payable whilst an extended stay of 14 weeks is permissible but on the condition that they are not payable by employers. The revised maternity leave policy recognizes for the first time, that instances of stillborn babies, miscarriages or the new mother of a legally adopted newborn baby are entitled to 4 weeks maternity leave with pay and up to 26 weeks without pay. Male employees in the public service are entitled to 5 days paternity leave.

117. In relation to providing breastfeeding or milk for the child, women employed in the private sector are entitled to one or more daily breaks or a daily reduction in working hours to do so. Similarly for the public sector, flexible hour arrangements and daily breaks are available for women to breastfeed their babies. More importantly, the Cabinet issued a directive to all government ministries, public bodies and state owned enterprises to provide a day care room or space for lactating mothers to breastfeed their babies should the need arise. All such means are enabling mechanisms to ensure that women are not disadvantaged when breastfeeding.

118. Samoa acknowledges that regulating the informal sector with a view to providing women with access to social security and other benefits is challenging in terms of resources however, the MCIL notes that it has a long term goal to transform the informal sector to the formal sector. It must be noted that increasing maternity benefits for the private sector to be equivalent to the public sector will impact on private sector hiring more men than women due to more financial resources needed to fund it thus, means more discrimination. The SLRC notes a survey carried out in 2012 that there are more men in the informal sector (68.3%) than women (66.3%).[24] Hence, this exclusion equally affects both men and women in the informal sector.

119. Samoa understands that it is still not fully compliant with CEDAW Article 11 despite recent improvements made for maternity leave entitlements. Samoa still falls short of the UN CEDAW Committee's recommendations for both sectors to have 14 weeks paid leave. Samoa however, acknowledges that this is the beginning of a continuum of Government efforts to provide maternity leave for women on an equal basis. The same proposes a review and

[24] Report on Samoa's Compliance with CEDAW 2016, Samoa Law Reform Commission, pg 85.

increase of paternity leave as well as implementing a parental leave policy which can either be taken by male or female or shared between both parents. The ratification of the two conventions requires extensive consultations with the private sector particularly the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

120. Samoa acknowledges that there are no equivalent benefits for informal employment, it should be noted that this is equally a problem for men too. Both male and female workers are entitled to social security benefits like the retirement fund, death benefit and the senior officials' fund. The government has tried through mass media awareness on the Samoa National Provident Fund (SNPF) Act 1972 and amendments thereto to increase the public's awareness including those in the informal sector that even if they work as babysitter's, grounds men, housekeepers, their employers should pay their SNPF contribution. Effective on 1st July 2016, the SNPF contribution from both employer and employee has increased from 6% to 7%.

121. It is valuable to also note that the Superannuation Scheme as speculated under the Superannuation Scheme Fund Act 1961 (and following amendments) expressly indicates that senior citizens of 65+ years of age shall receive a monthly benefit of SAT130.00. Complementary to this, fees for consultations and medication at public hospital and passenger fares on inter island ferry trips are waived. As speculated by law, all male and female workers irrespective of the sector they are employed in shall be entitled to social security benefits without discrimination. As of August 2016, a total of 8,331 elderly people, 51% of whom are females and 49% are males are beneficiaries of this scheme which indicates an estimated ST15 million a year government spending on the superannuation scheme.

122. It is further important to note, that all employees in the public and private sectors are required to pay tax for an Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC). The framework for social security in relation to a person's inability to work is catered for under the Accident Compensation Act 1989 which provides compensation for workers who suffer personal injury by accident arising from or caused by, their work environment. The ACC coverage not only provides payment for the compensation cost itself but also others in the form of allowances to cover other damages which may result in death.

123. Please also refer to Section 11.1 and 11.2

Further progress on implementation

124. The LERA provides some protection from workplace harassment in private sector whereby an employee can be terminated for misconduct or abuse which includes sexual, physical, verbal or mental harassment of employees or employers. Alternatively, an employee can cease his/her service without notice where he/she is subject to physical, mental or verbal abuse or harassment by the employer. Should this occur, the employer is legally obligated to pay any earned wages to that employee.

125. The PSC is currently developing a Workplace Harassment policy for the public sector but in the meantime, the Public Service Act 2004 continues to provide the guidelines under the Code of Conduct regarding complaints by public servants in relation to any kind of harassment including sexual harassment for both genders. When a complaint is received by the CEO, the CEO or the CEO's delegate conducts a preliminary investigation and can either charge the officer or give him/her a warning. However, if the officer denies the allegations, the CEO appoints an Investigating Officer from another ministry to investigate the complaint and make recommendations to the CEO on next steps.

126. According to the Samoa 2012 Labour Force Survey, the highest rate of unemployment was found in the young population (aged 15 – 29). The youth unemployment rate is recorded[25] at 16.4%, where females had a higher unemployment rate of 20.2 % in comparison to the

[25] Samoa 2012 Labour Force Survey, p. 45.

14.0% of males, thus unemployed young population make up more than half of the total national unemployment rate. In addition, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities is recorded[26] at 4.6%, where males had a higher unemployment rate of 5% compared to that of 3.9% for females.

127. Therefore, the MWCSD has secured funding support through the SWSD, Youth Employment Program to promote entrepreneurship and job creation opportunities for women, young people and people with disability. Since 2016, 50% of the participants who attended trainings funded by YEP are young women aged 18-35 years.

128. Rural micro-businesses will be strengthened through the establishment of a centralised and community based Small Business Incubator (SBI) model (incorporating both "with-walls" and "without walls" concepts to foster employment and job creation and create an enabling environment to better support and empower vulnerable families in the informal sector particularly young women. The incubation process will protect, nurture and guide micro-business initiatives through the full process from concept through start-up to enterprise survival and growth in a competitive market place. The young women beneficiaries will operate in a non-discriminatory environment regardless of their socio-economic background.

129. To address youth unemployment, a directory of employment to direct young people including women to employability areas to secure employment was established and 2/4 young people registered are females. Since 2016, 50% of participants who attended job seekers trainings conducted were females. A total of 12 trainees (58% of whom are females) have secured employment at the Samoa Culinary Association Training. An E-Platform is also in the pipeline for market training to provide relevant skills and experience leading to employment for young job seekers. The Chamber of Commerce facilitates access to career development services through an internship program, where 65% of participants are female compared to 35% of males.

130. The National Youth Awards (NYA), initiated in 2001 aims to profile best practices and acknowledge young people's contributions to social and economic development of their families and communities. In 2012, a total of 22 young people (17 males, 5 females) were selected for the awards, however, one of the 5 females received the top award as a Young Agent of Change. In contrast, in 2014, the females outnumbered the males for the first time in the award nominations with a ratio of 10 to 3; the top award was received by a female.

Article 12: Women and health

Response to Concluding Observations 32 and 33

131. The Government of Samoa invested in new hospital facilities for its main public hospital at Motootua. The improved amenities are a relief for Samoa's people who seek the medical assistance and services. The expansion of facilities has also increased the capacity of the hospital to care for more patients and thus making health services more accessible for people as well as persons with disabilities. Upgrades were also made to 8 district hospitals around the country to ensure health care services are also available to women and girls in the rural areas. Outpatient consultations and treatments for children below 15 years, elderly aged 65 years and over, people with disabilities, women seen for maternal health conditions is free of charge. This also applies to testing, imaging and admissions. According to the SDHS 2014, "93% of women who had a live birth in the five years preceding the survey received antenatal care from a trained health provider (doctor, nurse, midwife, nurse aide). This percentage will increase to 96% when antenatal care coverage received by a Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) is included. Coverage is high among mothers regardless of their background characteristics".[27] Further to these, the VWRs continue to implement and monitor the health

[26] Samoa 2012 Labour Force Survey, p. 99.

[27] Samoa Demographic and Health Survey, 2014, p. 148.

components of the Aiga ma Nuu Manuia program at the national level. This includes promoting access to basic hygiene and sanitation, clean living quarters, clean kitchens, clean surroundings, access to clean drinking water, smoke-free homes and vegetable gardens.

132. The Gender Based Violence Project is funded by the UNFPA and a partnership with the Government of Samoa. The project aims to deliver high quality family planning and sexual reproductive health services, information, commodities and community-based interventions. One initiative under the GBV project is supporting the functioning of the Youth Friendly Drop in Centre managed by the Samoa Family Health Association (SFHA) which provides non-discriminatory sexual reproductive health services and counselling to young people who are vulnerable to teenage pregnancies and sexual transmitted infections (STIs). Since July 2015 to September 2016, a total of 1,049 young people (745 females and 304 males) utilized the services at this centre. Two other Youth friendly clinics just opened a few weeks ago in the rural areas of Samoa through the work of National Health Services.

133. In its efforts to ensure women in the rural areas receive health services, the SFHA implements monthly mobile clinic visits to communities and prisons. In 2015, a total of 142 females received family planning/contraceptive services in Quarter 1 with an increase in Quarter 3 and 4 of 334 and 225 females respectively. 465 women used the services provided by the mobile clinic from January to June 2016.[28]

134. Although there are some issues in relation to access to family planning, the SDHS 2014 reported that 31% of all women interviewed reported having used a contraception method at some point in time, 30% have used a modern method and 6% have used a traditional method. Among modern methods, injectables (20%) are the most commonly used method, followed by the pill (13%). Withdrawal and rhythm are each reported to have been used by 3% of the women. Ever use of any contraceptive method increases with age, peaking among women in their late thirties through forties, and then declining among women 45-49.[29] Exposure to family planning methods through various media forms is more common among women than men. Television is the most common source of family planning messages for both women (38%) and men (32%) age 15-49. In contrast, 31% of women and 25% of men heard a family planning message on radio while newspapers and magazines remain the least common source of family planning message.[30]

135. The Ministry of Health in its review of the SRH and HIV/AIDS policy noted some key findings; low knowledge of youth on preventive measures such as condom use, contraceptives; low numbers of young people accessing testing services. Thus, in the development of the new Sexual Reproductive Health Policy 2017-2021, and HIV/AIDS and STIs policy 2017-2021, these findings have prompted new strategies to address these challenges including prevention and responding to issues of maternal health and linking SRH to gender based violence (responding to cases of incest, rape and violence). Steps are also taken to ensure the availability of mental health services such as counselling.

Article 13: Women in economic and social life

Further progress on implementation

136. The National Policy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 with Key Outcome 3: Increased economic empowerment, entrepreneurship and employment of women compliments the new Community Sector Plan 2016-2020 focusing on economic development for women and men focusing on individual household and village level economy will contribute to the achievement of the Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016-2020 theme "Accelerating Sustainable Development and Broadening Opportunities for All".

[28] Samoa Family Health Quarterly Reports, 2015 and 2016.
[29] Samoa Demographic and Health Survey, 2014, p. 89.
[30] Samoa Demographic and Health Survey, 2014, p. 103.

137. "The introduction of the new Companies Act in July 2008 led to a massive improvement in Samoa's scores in the World Bank Doing Business indicators in 2009 in relation to business start-up, with a ranking of 20 (an improvement in ranking from 131 in the previous year). While it is too early to properly assess the impact of the new Companies Act, it is clear that the Act has the potential to be of particular benefit to women entrepreneurs. The ability to incorporate with a single shareholder may be especially significant. It means that a woman can start up a formal business registered as a company on her own without having to bring in a male relative (husband or brother, for example as a second shareholder.)

138. Samoa understands that despite the milestones achieved to date, challenges still remain in terms of access by women to funds at commercial banks due to the strict policies for lenders. Women also have capacity issues in terms of business management skills which contribute to the failure of small businesses owned by women. To illustrate, the Micro Finance Facility Scheme whose beneficiaries are women groups was implemented by the Development Bank of Samoa (DBS) in collaboration with the MWCSD. The scheme provides women with access to loans for developing their families through income generating small businesses and uses a group guarantee as loan security. These women will never be able to access loan at commercial banks because they lack the collaterals required to secure loans. The scheme was reviewed in 2016 and 343 women beneficiaries were interviewed from the two main islands Upolu and Savaii. The findings reveal that there is a demand for such a scheme to be sustained to allow women in low income families to access credit to improve their livelihoods. Some of the improvements made to women's housing as a result of the scheme included better housing facilities and paying for water connection. Women have also started to make savings account and establish small businesses from a low interest loan. However, it was a real challenge for some women due to the lack of banking facilities in the rural villages; therefore the DBS incurred high expenses in collecting payment per week. Also, the DBS staff dishonesty behaviours in handling the payments and receipting of women's loans as well as processing loans for women who did not go through business training contributed to the scheme's failure. The review recommends inclusion of young women in the scheme, business management trainings to be conducted, partnerships between government and SBEC to enable access to finance and additional resources to facilitate a new scheme for women and youth to name a few. The DBS is developing a guideline for a new credit facility scheme for women and youth which is expected to commence implementation in the third quarter of FY2017.[31]

139. Please also refer to articles 3, 4, 5, 11 and 12

Article 14: Rural women

Response to Concluding Observations 34 and 35

140. Rural women are the core beneficiaries of programs and activities undertaken by the MWCSD particularly through the Division for Women (DFW). Skills Building trainings and workshops encourage the making of Samoa's traditional 'treasures' measina, such as the Siapo and Ie Samoa, in addition to Flower/Bouquet arrangements and Elei Printing. From its inception, these activities were the core focus of MWCSD's drive for program prioritization recognizing that they serve develop practical skills for rural women in addition to, creating income-generating opportunities at its most micro level. Instrumental to this is the Small Business Enterprise Corporation (SBEC), which has successfully and independently generated local small business ventures. They further provide advice on business management skills to ensure small business ventures are efficient and effectively sustained. Rural women also benefit from Educational and Awareness Programs led by or supported by the MWCSD and its partners. Specifically targeted programs include education and awareness-raising

[31] Purcell, G. F and Leilua, L. N. 2016, Review: Micro Credit Financing Scheme, Development Bank of Samoa, August 2016.

workshops on CEDAW, CRC and CRPD as are relevant to women and young girls. Others focus on; Sexual Reproductive Health, Counselling (for mothers and young girls), Anti-violence campaigns, Breastfeeding and Nutrition initiatives to name a few. To date, 252 villages (traditional and non-traditional villages) are covered by the National Beautification Program of which is led by VWRs and women's committees to maintain basic health and sanitation for villages. Also, the VWRs and representatives of their women's committees were exposed to 40 opportunities for FY 2014/2015 and FY 2015/2016 through consultations and capacity building in the areas of legislative and policy development, awareness workshops on DRR, human rights, health issues, and birth registration. Some key VWRs participated in the 11 WAMM where they learned about key achievements and challenges towards gender equality and women's development in leadership, economic, DRR and violence prevention. Consequently, they would conduct post 11 WAMM programs for their women's committee on best practices from 11 WAMM. A key achievement for the 11 WAMM is the establishment of the Toomaga o Aiga.

141. Further to this, the establishment of the VWR under the Ministry of Women Affairs Act 1990 Section 16A plays an important role in ensuring the needs of rural women are heard and addressed by central and local governance bodies. Rural women are well represented at national forums and consultation led by the Government or private sector through the network of VWR who are selected from rural (and urban) village communities. Their role as liaison officers strategically facilitate the collaborative relationship Government has fostered with its rural communities. VWRs not only serve to provide a community's perspective into developmental initiatives but also advise on matters of national interest. To date, VWRs are employed by the MWCSD and are relied upon by all Government agencies and NGOs. The role of VWRs combines advisory and operational functions. Their performance is monitored on a monthly basis through a Performance Management System (PMS) housed within the DFW.

Women and climate change

142. Women have become increasingly engaged in climate change resilience programs through the development of village response plans and participation in trainings on the toolkit for effective response by response agencies. From the 35 agencies and organizations which participated in these trainings from 2015-2017, 60% of the participants are women. In addition, 43 villages have completed trainings and conducted simulations through the Community Disaster and Climate Risk Management (CDCRM) Program and CDCRM toolkit. A total of 20 village disaster plans developed during these trainings have been endorsed. The participation of women (45%) indicates that their needs and engagement continues to be considered in the development and implementation of such plans including needs of PWDs.

143. The National Disaster Management Office continues to conduct awareness programs and simulations targeting schools, agencies and communities whereby the IEC materials and other relevant information on disaster preparedness and management particularly for the vulnerable including women and girls including those with disabilities and elderly. Women make up 40% of the participants involved in the assessment of building for evacuation centres whereby 33 schools and 5 buildings have been assessed and declared as evacuation centres. These centres have been assessed on the basis on ability to cater for the needs of all people with particular consideration of ensuring women and girls are provided with care and protection in times of crisis. For example, there should be proper facilities to afford women and girls privacy and space when using bathroom facilities, sleeping, breastfeeding and others.

144. Please also refer to articles 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Response to Concluding Observations 36 and 37

Women with disabilities

145. The National Disability Policy (NDP) is currently being reviewed to support the implementation of CRPD with a particular focus on women with disabilities as per recommendation of the Mid-term review. However, the NDP lacks the specific focus on elimination of discrimination against women with disabilities which is fully addressed by the Samoa National Policy for Gender Equality 2016-2020. The Samoa Disability Program (SDP) is developing a policy issues paper to inform the way forward for a new disability framework. The CRPD Legislative Compliance Review identified that there is no legislation specific to PWD and will be addressed by current review of the disability policy if it is not highlighted under current policies.

Further progress on implementation

146. The Family Safety Act 2013 provides for the protection orders to be issued in relation to any person without distinction of any kind such as race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status who is or has been in a domestic relationship with a respondent and who is or has been subjected or allegedly subjected to an act of domestic violence.

147. National Disaster Management Plan 2016-2019 highlights attention to priority cross-cutting issues which also include persons with disabilities (PWD). The DMO Draft Disability Policy highlights the inclusion of PWD in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy document is to outline further actions to strengthen disability policy and programming in the Samoa DRM framework.

148. The National Policy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 provides a framework for government's commitment to gender equality and inclusivity of persons with disabilities in broad areas of Ending Violence, better access to health and educational information and services, equal economic opportunities for women including women with disabilities, increased women's participation in leadership, and enhancing gender equality approaches for community resilience, climate change and promotion of gender equality.

149. Under the CDS Plan 2016-2020, our ultimate aim for the next five years is to improve social outcomes for the most vulnerable in our communities. This means that building on lessons learned from previous years, good practice models, strengths of families, communities and ongoing programs, the community sector's re-aligned social protection and community development framework will focus on supporting the development of more integrated and all-inclusive policies, program strategies and interventions. These will contribute towards the realization of better social outcomes for vulnerable target groups including persons with disabilities. The indicators for monitoring the CDSP 2016-2020 also collect data for PWD.

150. The SBS have expanded the Census 2016 and DHS 2014 to include disability questions (aka Washington Group Questions) to collect accurate data on PWDs to better inform policy and programming for persons with disabilities. The SDP funded an external consultant to analyse the data and compile the Disability Prevalence Report 2015.

151. NOLA a dedicated NGO through the SDP leads advocacy and awareness programs at the national and community level on disability rights and inclusion with collaboration from other disability organizations and service providers. In Jan-Jun 2016, 330PWDs (213 females, 117 males) participated in these awareness programs. Activity outcomes included the development of athlete teams under the Special Olympics Samoa from 2 districts, 200 referrals were made to the necessary services with strengthened engagement with the MWCSD Village women representatives who coordinated and ensured the participation of PWDs and their families within villages/districts.

152. The SDP, in its second round of community project funds, is financially supporting 22 families with PWD on micro business development. A total of 42 PWD (17 females, 25 males), 8 from Savaii and 14 from Upolu benefitted from this program. In addition, the Mobility Device Services provided mobility devices to 383 females (48.6% of total clients).

Part IV

Equality before the law, and elimination of discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations

Article 15: Equality before the law

Further progress on implementation

153. The SLRC Legislative Compliance Review report notes that the Constitution of Samoa 1960 provides that all persons are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection under the law. "Additionally, there is no legislation in Samoa that denies a woman the right to conduct legal transactions such as entering contracts or administering property. Nor are there specific legislative limits to a woman's legal capacity in criminal and civil matters and her right to retain legal capacity after marriage. Any such legislation would be contrary to Article 15 of the Constitution and the Samoa Act 1921."[32]

Article 16: Marriage and family law

Response to Concluding Observations 38 and 39

154. Samoa's legislation is broadly consistent with the Article 16 requirements.[33] The amendment and establishment of several legislations, as well formulation of policies and setting up of systems over the years saw a huge commitment by the government of Samoa in building an environment where people's rights are not hindered due to their inferiority.

155. Under the *Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Ordinance 1961*, a marriage is void where by reason of duress or mistake or insanity or otherwise, there was at the time of the marriage and absence of consent by either party to the marriage to the other party. Furthermore, the *Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Ordinance* 1961 governs separation and dissolution of marriage. This Act was amended in 2010 to provide no-fault grounds for divorce, enabling either party to a marriage to apply for divorce on grounds that the parties have separated and lived separately for a continuous minimum period of 12 months. The amendments in 2010 also resulted in expediting divorce where domestic violence is involved. If the Court is satisfied that a party to the marriage is the subject of domestic violence, the Court may hold that the marriage has broken down irretrievably even if the parties have not separated or lived separately for a continuous period.

156. The SLRC report recommends that the language in the legislation regarding spousal maintenance and alimony upon the dissolution of marriage should be amended to be gender neutral to reflect spousal maintenance rather than maintenance of the wife. Furthermore, the legislative criteria considered by the Court before the issuance of a spousal maintenance order should be the same for both genders.[34]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Samoa Law Reform Commission Discussion Paper DP03.

[34] Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Final Report* 17/16 (August 2016), p. 92.

157. The *Child Care and Protection Bill* proposes to increase the minimum age for females to be the same as males at 18 years. The requirement of parental consent to marriage should apply equally to both genders and should be required for the marriage of any person under 21 years.

Other obligations

158. The GoS notes the recommendation by the committee to enhance the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex disaggregated data and would like to report that the GoS began in 2014 with the establishment of a set of core minimum Gender indicators for Samoa modelled on the UNESCAP Regional Gender Framework adopted for the Review of Beijing Platform for Action + 20. The dialogue on developing the indicators and framework started with an All of Government Sectoral training which was organised by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) in partnership with the MWCSD. In addition, the Gender Statistical analysis training was conducted in 2016 which is discussed further in Section 25 of the report.

159. The SDS 2016-2020 key outcomes are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals through the promotion of well-being and a healthy Samoa for ALL citizens including women and girls of all ages. Also, their access to inclusive education is enhanced through improved quality of education and training at the national level. Hence, women, the girl child and females with disabilities enjoy equal access to education information, opportunities and services. More importantly, the SDS Key Outcome 8: Social Institutions Strengthened through enhancement of community development and community safety improved contributes to the achievement of SGD 5: Gender Equality by empowering women and girls, ensuring safe access to public places by women and girls including women and girls with disabilities and the elderly. In addition is the focus on ending discrimination against all women and girls and promoting a reduction in gender inequality by reporting harassment and discrimination as well as promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. This also includes promoting the empowerment of women and girls including women and girls with disabilities and the elderly in technology and leadership and decision making.

160. More importantly, the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow Up was established in 2016 consisting of representatives from government ministries, private sector, NGOs, civil society to engage and liaise with regional and international human rights bodies to facilitate the preparation of human rights reports. To successfully achieve this, the NMRF needs to consult with key implementing agencies, beneficiaries, and the general public to ensure implementation of human rights obligations is undertaken with wider participation. The Sadata website is created to disseminate information, and to organize and coordinate information gathering and data collection from government entities, but also other State actors such as the national office for statistics, parliament and the judiciary, for reporting and follow-up to recommendations.

161. The GoS has not ratified the Optional Protocols to the Convention.

162. The GoS supports the amendment to Article 20 of the Convention to prevent the serious delays in backlog of country reports to be discussed by the Committee to the short meetings times.

163. Samoa submitted its report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2014.

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